



A *Theo*-logy Without *logos*: On Jean-Luc Marion's Axio-meonto-theology

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Abstract

This paper aims to argue that Jean-Luc Marion's philosophical theology is an axio-meonto-*Theo*-logy which proposes a new way of approaching God. The traditional way of approaching God in *theo*-logy attained God by the predication and the predicate in the categories of being. However, Marion's theology attempts to bring out the freedom of God from all categories of being. It provides a critique of the traditional way of approaching God and two arguments for Marion's alternative approach. On the grounds of the axiological argument and the meontological argument, I defend Marion's *theology* from some recent criticisms.

Keywords Reason · Theology · Axio-meonto-*Theo*-logy · Jean-Luc Marion · *Logos* · *Agape*

Introduction

In the foreword of *Givenness and Revelation*, Fotiade and Jasper assert that 'in the present Gifford Lectures, Marion exhibits clearly his concern for what he has named *theo*-logy rather than *theo*-logy' (Marion, 2016, p. xviii). In this paper, I intend to further argue that Jean-Luc Marion's *theo*-logy is an axio-meonto-*theology* without humanized reasons, on the basis of his axiological argument and his meontological argument. The two arguments can be found in his novel exegesis of Anselm's argument. By jointly taking the two arguments into re-consideration, we can paint the full picture of Marion's *theology* which provides not only a critique of the traditional way of approaching God but also a new way of approaching and addressing God.

Gschwandtner provides an excellent discussion of Marion's reformulation of Anselm's argument and pinpoints his essential contribution, comparing him to other continental philosophers like Ricoeur, Henry, Lacoste and Falque (Gschwandtner,

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2013, pp. 212–219). According to her description of Marion's reformulation, Anselm appropriates God through love rather than proving God's existence through humanized reason. However, this does not exhaust the significance of Marion's re-interpretation.¹ His re-interpretation not only avoids the problem of onto-theology, but it also opens an axio-meonto-theo-logy. Scholars explain well how Marion argues for a new approach (Collins, 2015; Gschwandtner, 2014; Puntel & White, 2011; Westphal, 2006). However, none acknowledges that such a new approach is a hybrid approach of meontology and axiology. A potential contribution of this paper is to clarify in what way, Marion's approach neither is an ontological approach nor leads to a new ontology. The phrase, 'without logos', negatively imply that God or *theos* is free from all categories of being within humanized reason, and they also positively suggest that God or *theos* is a name denoting the Great Reason that human beings are deficit of expressive language and unable to find the correct word for them. In the name theo-logy without logos the term 'without' means sublation rather than abandonment.

Here it is necessary to clarify the key terms 'axiology' and 'meontology'. Meontology is the philosophical study of non-being through which the revelation of God can be free from all categories of being; axiology is the philosophical study of value or goodness through which the supremacy of 'the Good' or 'goodness' in the name of God can be uncovered. The study of non-being in meontology can be derived into two: a study of non-being and a study of not-yet-being. The Greek word *me* (μή) means a negation ('non') or privation ('not-yet'). The former investigates the nature of non-being as the empty space, whereas the latter investigates the nature of not-yet-being as potential being. In the study of non-being, meontology lies in sharp contrast to the Western concept of ontology. If meontology by its very utterance implies a new (hidden, reverse) ontology, then meontology is a 'subset' of ontology. By contrast, meontology as a study of not-yet-being is subsumed under ontology. According to Plato's reading of *me on* in *Sophist*, non-being is explicated as the part of otherness which 'must be the notion of otherness directed-to some specific being other than itself' (256e5–7). In other words, non-being is a privation, derived from being. I believe, Plato makes a substantial contribution to the methodological guidance of how we approach non-being within the categories of being. He demonstrates the logical connection between ontology and meontology. However, there could be many ways of giving, other than logical argumentation in a theoretical perspective. Marion draws resources from Anselm to break through the traditional ontological approach and reaches the axiological approach. Such a breakthrough begins with meontology and ends with axiology. Axiology serves as the inevitable foundation for meontology and ontology; it cannot be reduced to a reverse or hidden ontology.

¹ It seems that Gschwandtner's analysis focuses on 'Is the Argument Ontological? The Anselmian Proof and the Two Demonstrations of the Existence of God in the *Meditations*' which is published in *Cartesian Questions*, rather than 'Is the Ontological Argument Ontological? The Argument According to Anselm and its Metaphysical Interpretation According to Kant' which is published in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*. Although the central thesis in two articles is the same, the arguments are different.

In other words, *onto* and *me onto* are dependent on *axios*, but not vice versa. Precisely, both being and non-being result from a gift as its accomplishment in love.

This discussion will be carried out in three parts. In the first part, I explain Marion's critique of the traditional way of approaching God. In the second part, the two arguments for an alternative way of approaching God in Marion's *theo*-phenomenology will be considered. In the final part, I argue that Marion's theology suggests an axio-meonto-theology, and one of the advantages of this *theo*-logy is briefly analyzed in relation to atheism; that both *theo*-logy and atheism begin with the *epoche* of any idol God, predicated by certain categories of being. This paper concludes by refuting some criticisms that Marion's theology is unable to escape from ontology and Christian faith.

Critique of the traditional way of Approaching God²

Marion initiates his project clearly in the preface to the English edition of *God without Being*,

Under the title *God without Being*, I am attempting to bring out the absolute freedom of God with regard to all determinations...for us, humans, the fact of Being (Marion, 1991, p. xx).³

Before going into Marion's attempt to bring out the absolute freedom of God from all determinations, it is necessary to clarify what the determinations refer to. They refer to the categories of being, through which we speak against something. The term 'category' can be traced back to the ancient Greek words κατηγορεῖν [*kategorerein*] or κατηγορία [*kategoria*]. The ancient Greek word κατηγορεῖν primarily means 'to accuse', 'to speak against', 'to say of' or 'to predicate' (Aristotle, 2002, p. 80). And

² Gschwandtner provides an excellent explanation of both Marion's critique of the late medieval/early modern move to univocal language about God in *Théologie blanche* and Marion's argument of *Ontologie grise* (Gschwandtner 2007, pp. 14–15). Descartes, in his *Ontologie grise*, rejects metaphysics under the influence of Aristotelian priority of being as being. The late medieval/early modern, particularly Mersenne, somehow distorts this by privileging theology and dismissing ontology as impossible in *Théologie blanche*. It is true that Marion has written extensively about these issues. However, Marion's examination mainly addresses how Aristotle shapes Descartes' hidden ontology, Aristotle's doctrine of category and its connection with sciences and logic is underthematized in Marion's work. In this section, I formulate Marion's critique by focusing on how the doctrine of category determines the development of theology.

³ It is true that *God without Being* is Marion's relatively early work. I have deliberately paid attention to this work because *God without Being* is the landmark volume in which he begins his project. As Fotiade and Jasper point out, 'for it is in this landmark volume that he begins to disengage the existence of God from the metaphysical concept of Being (and the discourse on the "death of God"), and at the same time relate it to the notion of "givenness", which not only exceeds intentional constitution and restores ontological difference to the field of phenomenological analysis, but also has the potential to resist the deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence, undertaken by Derrida' (Marion 2016, p. xvii). The recent development of Marion's philosophy and theology has its ground in the work. It seems to be unavoidable to discuss this best-known philosophical and theological work in the English-speaking world if one wants to offer a systematic account of Marion's thought.

the word κατηγορία first and foremost means predication or predicate. The former is a verb, but the latter is a noun (Baumer, 1993; Whitaker, 1996). According to Aristotle, there are ten categories in total. They are the different ways of predicating which necessary predication involves (Aristotle, 1997, p. 8). The categories are all referred to the first category, to *ousia*. Since *ousia* is necessarily contained in the definitions of each of them, categories cannot be separated from *ousia* and can only be in the being of *ousia* (O'Farrell, 1982, p. 99). The categories are what Being according to itself means. They express Being according to the beings themselves. Given that the categories signify directly Being, Aristotle begins by arguing for a science which studies *Being qua Being* (1003a1–2; in Kirwan, 1993, p. 201). Aristotle makes a distinction between the sciences in general and the particular sciences. Science in general studies *Being qua Being*, and the properties inherent in it in virtue of its own nature, whereas the particular sciences study the attributes of some portion of beings. He states that,

There is a science which studies *Being qua Being*, and the properties inherent in it in virtue of its own nature. This science is not the same as any of the so-called particular sciences, for none of the others contemplates *Being generally qua Being*; they divide off some portion of it and study the attribute of this portion, as do for example the mathematical sciences...But since it is for the first principles and the most ultimate causes that we are searching, clearly they must belong to something in virtue of its own nature...Therefore it is of *Being qua Being* that we too must grasp the first causes (1003a20–21; in Kirwan, 1993, p. 1).

The term 'qua' or 'according to which' will mean predicated of Being by *logos* [λόγος]. At 983a56, Aristotle asserts that if we are properly to know Being we must be conversant with its *logos* (Kirwan, 1993, p. 78). *Logos* is the cause why what is predicated must be predicated of it. It follows that if there is no *logos*, then there could not be science. Following the rule of implication, *modus tollens*, it is valid to deny the antecedent by denying the consequent. Following the rule of replacement, *double negation*, the antecedent 'there is no *logos*' is negated. In this way, we could conclude that there is (are) *logos* [logoi]. *Logos* means 'reasoned discourse' or 'reasoning', through which a science is possible (Heidegger, 1995, pp. 25–34; Moss, 2014, p. 208). Science is always with *logos*. Without *logos*, there is no science. *Logos* is thus the necessary condition for science.

Based on the lesson of Aristotle, there are two approaches of scientific inquiry. Heidegger makes some substantial contributions on the two approaches in his diagnosis of metaphysics (Heidegger, 1995, pp. 35–36; 1997, pp. 14–17). The sciences in general which disclose being in general designate ontological sciences, whereas the particular sciences which disclose beings-as-such designate ontic sciences. While ontic sciences 'thematize a given being that in a certain manner is already disclosed prior to scientific disclosure', ontological sciences demand 'a fundamental shift of view: from beings to being' (Heidegger, 1998, p. 41). In other words, ontic sciences which investigate specific beings are different from ontological sciences, the latter inquire into Being itself. The distinction between ontic and ontological lies in positive science and philosophical science. It marks the very difference between

theology and philosophy. 'Theology is a positive science, and as such, therefore, is absolutely different from philosophy' (Heidegger, 1998, p. 41).⁴ Theology as the particular science of faith does not need philosophy. What is revealed in faith can never be ontically founded by way of a rational knowing as exercised by autonomously functioning reason. Yet the explication of basic concepts in faith requires philosophy. The sense of theological concepts is necessarily determined by categories of being that is constitutive of human Dasein as such. Heidegger takes the theological concept of sin as an example (Heidegger, 1998, p. 51–52). In Christianity, sin indicates the historical event of origin sin in the *Book of Genesis*, while the sense of sin is necessarily interpreted under the guidance of the concept of guilt, an original ontological determination of the existence of human Dasein. Thus, theology as a particular science is rooted in and develops from the existence of human Dasein.

Marion shares a similar observation, especially theology as a particular science of God in the development of special metaphysics [*metaphysica specialis*]. Since the medieval period, rational theology [theologia *rationalis*] within special metaphysics has determined how the study of God is shaped. The theo-logy pole of metaphysics determines a site for what one later will name 'God'. He asserts that "'God" is determined starting from and to the profit of that of which metaphysics is capable, that which it can admit and support' (Marion, 1991, p. 34).⁵ Instead of arising from God himself, theology is restricted under the guidance of special metaphysics that God is determined within human categories. The traditional way of approaching God in theology is distorted by the 'pollution' of metaphysics. He points out the two central structures of the metaphysical way of approaching God. Firstly, God is understood as the *ens causa sui* in Deism. The *ens causa sui* is rationally deduced from the principle of causation. However, such a conception of God offers only an idol of 'God' so limited that it can neither aspire to worship and adoration nor even tolerate them without immediately betraying its insufficiency. The way of approaching God in *metaphysica specialis* is doomed to failure in the face of the revelation of God. The metaphysical concept of God as *causa sui* implies an onto-theological character of God under a humanized reason. In this regard, he questions, 'Even for

⁴ In 'Phenomenology and Theology', Heidegger begins by considering theology in the sense of Christian theology. Christian theology is based on the history of Christianity, Christianity as something that has come about historically, witnessed by the history of through its institutions, cults and communities as a widespread phenomenon in world history. However, he then asserts that theology does not belong to Christianity because theology is a science which initially makes Christianity as an event in world history possible. Christian theology is only one of the examples in theology. What makes Christianity as an event in world history possible is faith. Faith understands itself only in believing. We 'know' about the event as a fact only in believing. The existence of Christ is reoriented in and through the mercy of God grasped in faith. Nevertheless, theology is not speculative knowledge of God. All concepts in theology are essentially related to the *theo*-occurrence as such which refers to some historical events. For instance, the crucifixion is an historical event, and this event gives testimony to itself as a revelation of the crucified God in Christian faith. Theology 'can never be deduced from a purely rationally constructed system of sciences', as it consists of both faith and events in world history (Heidegger 1998, p. 44).

⁵ Marion strongly criticizes the late medieval/early modern move to univocal language about God in *Théologie blanche*. It is another interesting study to investigate the similarities and differences of Marion's interpretation of the late medieval/ early modern move and Heidegger's. Yet it would be beyond the scope of this paper.

the “God of the philosophers and the scholars,” do *causa sui*, “Sufficient Reason,” *purus actus*, or *energeia* offer a sufficiently divine name to make God appear?” (Marion, 2008, pp. 54–55)⁶ Any potential answer in philosophy involves circularity. Humanized reason is not sufficient to think of the way in which God is God because God denotes the unfathomable origin of reason, being ahead of all human categories within humanized reason. More importantly, the ‘rational God’ is not the ‘religious God’, even though philosophers can offer a divine name to make God of the philosophers and the scholars appear. As believers, we do ‘not think God starting from the *cause sui*, because it does not think God starting from the cause, or within the theoretical space defined by metaphysics, or even starting from the concept, but indeed from the God alone’. On the contrary, the ‘religious God’ ‘yields himself-reveals himself’ (Marion, 1991, p. 36).

Secondly, God is understood as every being in pantheism. In conceiving of God as every being, pantheists attempt to approach God qua every being and every entity in reality, e.g., stones, plants and animals. ‘God is to signify Being’ (Marion, 1991, p. 40). However, God manifests Himself by His creation of every being and every entity, but it is not the case that God is constituted according to every being and every entity. Marion states that ‘God gives Being to beings only because he precedes not only these beings, but also the gift that he delivers to them to be’ (Marion, 1991, p. 75). The possibility of God cannot be attained by every being and every entity, but on the contrary, the possibility of Being can only be attained by God. All these examples show how metaphysics distorts the way of approaching God in theology. God is ‘understood’ according to subject (God)-predicate [*ens causa sui* or *ens*] within human intelligence bounded by the categories of being. But *theo-logically*, a question immediately presents itself. If on the one hand God is determined by human intelligence as well as human categories, and on the other hand God is first apprehended by the human mind, before every other specification, independent of every measure other than that of human understanding, is this not internally contradictory? This is why Marion poses the question, ‘But for God, if at least we resist the temptation to reduce him immediately to our own measure, does the same still apply?’ (Marion, 1991, p. xx).

⁶ The principle of Sufficient Reason can trace back to the modern sense of reason since Leibniz (Marion 2017, p. 78). It is said to regulate. This can be understood as the ‘giving’ of a reason for a statement: there is always a reason to be given, and everything is in principle knowable (Allers 1959, p. 372). The principle of Sufficient Reason in turn must have its root in the existence of somebody who understands and speaks about the knowable, a potential knowing subject of what I am potentially there to be known as an object. This being is a rational human being. However, Heidegger critically examines the modern sense of reason and looks for the origin of it (Heidegger 1998, pp. 63–81; see also Ruin 1998, p. 51 and Dahlstorm 2011, p. 135). Humanized reason is the ground for knowledge or distinction, but the whole question of an ultimate reason or ground in fact points to itself a question. The question of an origin leads back to that which needs such a ground, as well as to that which is capable of providing such a ground. The origin of reason points to the questions of being: how can a rational being be certain about its rationality? A rational being cannot be certain about its rationality because human being is uncertain to give or provide a reason for it.

Two Arguments for a Proper Way of Approaching God

After explaining Marion's critique of traditional ways of approaching God, we now turn to Marion's arguments for his new way of approaching God. He offers two arguments.⁷ The first argument is the "ontological" argument. I add a double quotation to the term 'ontological', as it is not exactly an ontological argument. Rather, it is an axiological argument with an ontological outlook, or in other words, it is an axiological argument that is misinterpreted as an ontological argument.⁸

He begins his argument from a detailed analysis of Anselm's ontological argument, which has long been misunderstood.⁹ Anselm's ontological argument can be found in *Proslogion*,

But surely this same fool, when he hears this very thing that I say, "something than which nothing greater can be thought", understands what he hears, and what he understands is in his understanding, even if he should not understand that it exists. For it is one thing for a thing to exist in the understanding, and another to understand a thing to exist...thus, even the fool is convinced that there is in the understanding at least something than which nothing greater can be thought, because he understands this when he hears it, and whatever is understood is in the understanding. And certainly that than which a greater cannot be thought cannot be in the understanding alone, that same thing than which a greater cannot be thought is [something] than which a greater can be thought. But this cannot be the case (Logan, 2009, pp. 35).

Scholars like Hartshorne (1962) and Malcolm (1960) distinguish two ontological arguments in *Proslogion* 2 and 3 respectively. However, Oppy refutes the sharp distinction because Anselm does not take himself to be providing an independent argument for the existence of God in *Proslogion* 3, but rather, the argument in *Proslogion* 3 is interpreted as one of the attributes of the being whose existence he has demonstrated in *Proslogion* 2 (Oppy, 2007, p. 12). Some reconstructions violate the original argument by putting their emphasis on the expressions 'can be conceived' and 'exists in the understanding'. Then how does Anselm argue for the existence of God in *Proslogion*?

⁷ Marion offers more than two arguments for a new way of approaching God. But I pay special attention to the meontological argument and the axiological argument to support my interpretation of Marion's theology as an axio-meonto-theology.

⁸ Unlike Descartes and Kant's interpretation, the sentence 'God does not exist' is not so much a logical contradiction as it is either a claim to infinite understanding or a misidentification of what is being talked about.

⁹ The classical interpretation of Anselm's argument as an ontological argument can be found in Kant, and it remains influential (Plantinga 1966). For further information of ontological argument, please see (Plantinga 1968 and Malcolm 1960). I make reference to Plantinga's work not because I agree with his interpretation, but simply because Marion also cites Plantinga's work, although Marion does not discuss it. It would be interesting to discuss the difference between the analytic interpretation and the continental interpretation, but it is outside of the objective of the present paper.

Anselm argues that (1) God is greater than that which can be thought and (2) The 'greater' is only specified by 'whatever it is better to be than not to be', particularly, the *summum bonum*. It follows that the notion of 'greater' can never be thought in terms of quantitative meaning, only qualitative meaning, similarly Plato's notion of 'the Good' or 'Goodness' can never be thought in terms of quantitative meaning. Anselm denies any concept of God from the outset. This is precisely what 'greater than can be thought' means; we understand the world by working through the predicates we apply to existing things, and we do that thinking according to our categories of being, and the 'greater' is that which is outside of all categories of being. In other words, the problem of value differs from the problem of ontology. When Anselm argues that God is greater than understanding, what he actually means is that God cannot be reduced to a list of predicates, because predicates are under the categories of being, no matter how great our conditions of knowledge are. In this regard, when Anselm says, 'God exists', what he actually means is that 'there is "X" beyond our understanding' and the X can be named God.

Here, Marion insightfully explains the proper understanding of Anselm's argument, 'it is not a question of understanding in a direct and dogmatic way that God exists, as if our thought could surpass its own limits; it is a question of our not being able to think that God is not' (Marion, 1992, p. 212). The point that God is beyond our conditions of understanding is an important one. It isn't that God could be anything; rather, the point is that the process our intellectual apparatus goes through when it makes sense of the world is finite, and anything finite cannot be an infinite God. A chair is fully accessible to our conditions of knowing; God is not. It isn't that God is too complex, or that God is irrational — complexity could still be finite, and irrationality is a misfiring of understanding, not something beyond it. Marion further indicates that Anselm's conclusion is often translated as saying 'God so truly is that he *could* not not be.' The double negation affirms the existence of God. The term 'could' is a modal verb designating the mode of Being if the modal verb 'could' is interpreted in a logical sense under the categories of being, e.g., potentiality or possibility.

In this interpretation, the term 'God' signifies an index reaching or appropriating an absence, 'X', which cannot be seen or known except through its lack, instead of a positive concept. God is thus nothing other than my lack or my finitude. God indicates our negative limit in our thinking, which surpasses in all cases the power of our conception. Our negative limit refers to our inability to exhaustively formulate predicates of God and our lack of predicates of God. Up to this point, the

argument can be understood as ontological only if it is about the ontology of human beings, or in other words, human finitude. There remains a logical gap between human finitude and the existence of God. We cannot directly justify the existence of God, as human beings are by nature finite. Marion clearly states that,

God surpasses essence through the same gesture that frees Him from the concept—because He can only be thought as He offers Himself, as sovereign good, as sovereign insofar as He is the good, rather than as Being (Marion, 1999, p. 152).

God frees Himself from all categories of being proposed by humanized reason. God can be approached only if He reveals Himself to us. In what circumstances might God reveal Himself or be approached by finite human beings? Marion argues that 'a humbly indispensable path to the overeminent good of a God' must be 'love' (Marion, 1999, p. 160). If God cannot be approached by our humanized reason, understanding and thought, then love is the new way of approaching God,

To reach the limit of our power to understand (according to the maximum) amounts to aiming at the best by loving it. Love goes further than understanding, because love can desire that which remains unknown, while knowledge cannot reach that which remains unknown or unknowable: "Let us long for the simple good, which is the entire good" (Marion, 1992, pp. 215–216).

His point is that we can never approach God merely by our power to understand because of our finitude, including our inability to exhaustively formulate predicate and our lack of predicate. In order to reach God, one has to 'love'.¹⁰ 'Since thinking the best and the supreme good necessitates that not limit itself to its representative and conceptual functions, but rather bring to bear the function of love' (Marion, 1999, p. 154). Love is not one-sided but must be reciprocal. Our 'relationship' or 'encountering' with God is not one of knower to known in the theoretical attitude, but of the loved for the lover in the practical attitude.

¹⁰ In 'Is the ontological argument ontological? The argument according to Anselm and its metaphysical interpretation according to Kant', Marion further points out the our finitude is twofold; that our inability of predication is caused by our finite faculty of understanding, and our lack of predicate is caused by our finite faculty of reason. This interpretation is corresponding to Kant's philosophy.

To bear in mind, the ‘love’ here specifically refers to *agape*, rather than *eros* or *philia*.¹¹ There are two essential features of *agape*. First, ‘*agape* alone, by definition, is not known, is not – but gives (itself)’ (Marion, 1991, p. 106). To love is identical to give, so love is not a noun referring to an entity or a status but a verb designating an act of giving. Second, ‘*agape* surpasses all knowledge, with a hyperbole that defines it and, indissoluble, prohibits access to it’ (Marion, 1991, 108). Love, in the end, is not spoken of or thought of, but it must be made. Because of our inability and our lack, we cannot ‘know’ who and where God is. As a result, it is only through the human ‘giving up on itself’ that the insight into God can come. God can come only because God is principally the lover and the giver. It begins with the amazing grace of God as the gift [*donation*]. In this way, Anslem’s ‘ontological’ argument starts from the ‘ontological’ discussion, but it develops its main point in the context of *agape*, that is to say, God is greater than any way of approaching him. Human beings can never actively and directly

¹¹ I agree with one of the reviewers that the comparison between Levinas and Marion may be helpful to illustrate Marion’s philosophy. However, this study is worthy to spend a paper or even a book to explore on Marion’s reception on Levinas and Levinas’ influence on Marion’s theology. To avoid off-track, here I can only add some general remarks on the issue. Both Levinas and Marion agree that the tradition ontology fails to address God in a proper way because God cannot and should not be restricted by any categories of being. Despite of the fact that they do not employ the term meontology, their approaches are similar. Both approach God or *theos* beyond any ontological categories. God or *theos* indexes the insufficiency of our linguistic expression within any ontological categories. The approach beyond any ontological categories is a meontological approach. Caputo and Scanlon clearly and correctly state the affinity between the two, ‘in both Levinas and Marion, the classical idea of transcendence proves to be not enough—it remains caught up in an ontological idolatry—and must give way to a certain ultratranscendence or more radical or hyperbolic transcendence beyond being’ (Caputo and Scanlon 2007, p. 3). They respectively provide their own accounts of meontological argument.

The very difference between the two does lie in the axiological argument. For goodness is not an attribution that seeks to measure the essence of God through a categorical predication, but rather, it is the name that signals the transcendence that draws all naming into the unthinkable. Min (2006) argues that how we relate to fellow human beings necessarily influences how we approach God. Levinas proposes the concept of hunger, whereas Marion suggests concept of charity. Min’s interpretation is insightful, yet I believe that the most important difference lies in their different understanding of love. Levinas argues that love is different from responsibility because his understanding of love mainly refers to *Eros* rather than *Agape* (Levinas 1998, p. 108; see also Ferreira 2001, p. 48). Love indicates an interlacing of egoistic pleasure and selfless engagement with the other in the sexual relation. Instead of giving the space for both *onto* and *me onto*, love raises an ethical question of responding others. Through the mediation of human others, I experience the irreducible gap and infinite distance between I and God. In contrast to Levinas’ understanding of love, Marion argues that love is charity because love reveals itself as distance in order to give itself, only love will be able to welcome it. Love gives the space for both *onto* and *me onto*. In love, a new relation between God and human being is established. God is a requisite while human being becomes a requestant who is not simply a passive receiver. I am an active subject who praises God. Such a new relationship can appropriate the infinite distance. In *Believing in Order to See*, Marion addresses his similarity and difference with Levinas. Levinas has not stopped relativizing the constituting primacy of the *I*. Levinas and Marion make the constituting *I* dependent on a relationship to someone other than itself. In the case of resurrection, the love of God radically inverts the constituting primacy that the position of the *I* is revealed as a *me* who is responding to a givenness rather than objectifying it. The resurrection of Jesus Christ admits that the resurrection as a phenomenon cannot be constituted by an *I*, yet in order to receive it, the *I* must allow itself to be constituted and revealed. By doing so, the *I* converts itself from the *I* to the *me* (Marion 2017, pp. 100–101). This miraculous faith renders the gaze apt to see the manifestation of God.

approach God unless God allows human beings to reach Him. Only if God gives Himself to human beings can human beings then receive His invitation and come to see Him.

Here we move to the edge of the ontology of human finitude and discover the *supremacy* of the Good or goodness [*summum bonum*] in the name of God. This implies that Anselm's argument is not only an 'ontological' argument but also an 'axiological' argument. Marion further deconstructs the axiological argument to pinpoint that a 'meontological' argument underlies it. The 'meontological' argument is not an argument for the existence of God, but rather, it is an argument for the very nature of God, that is to say, absolute freedom of God with regard to all determinations. He argues that,

Goodness advances to meet nonbeing...And if the Good surpasses all beings...that nonbeing itself also, *kai auto to me on*, tends towards the good beyond all beings (Marion, 1991, p. 76).

If the Good is understood to be beyond all categories of being, then it could be interpreted as non-being. This non-being does not mean what does not exist, but it is what remains outside all categories of being in ontology. How should we understand this claim? Negatively speaking, non-being surpasses all beings because of its deficiency. Positively speaking, the Good or goodness surpasses all beings because of its excess. Hence, both meet each other because both are beyond the categories of being in ontology. It leaves them as the subject of meontology. Yet unlike traditional meontology, Marion does not 'study' what remains outside all categories of being in ontology. As mentioned above, what remains outside all categories of being in ontology cannot be approached in the theoretical attitude, but in the practical attitude. Therefore, we must guard our silence like a treasure. This silence acts to free itself from idolatry, which reduces what remains outside all categories of being in ontology into certain categories of being in ontology. He elaborates on the importance of silence,

...to let men remain silent when they no longer have anything to say...The silence that is suitable to the *God* who reveals himself as *agape* in Christ consists in remaining silent through and for *agape*: to conceive *God* gives, to say *God* requires receiving the gift and-since the gift occurs only in distance-returning it (Marion, 1991, p. 107).

The silence is to allow the 'Good' or the 'goodness' or God revealing himself. This revelation is another expression of *agape*, an act of giving. There could many ways of giving, e.g., revelation, manifestation, showing, delivering and appearing, which despite their differences can all be understood as practical expressions of *agape*. If we succeeded in glimpsing only the outline of that by which *agape* exceeds every being and every entity, then our silence could let us become, somewhat, messengers who receive the divine message. In other words, Marion's argument is that without actively approaching God, we could passively wait for God's calling and message. To remain silent and patient is a proper way of approaching God. Furthermore, he makes a sub-argument in order to argue for our silence.

From our real point of view, the Good or goodness or the God remains invisible. If we pay attention to what remains inside the categories of being in ontology, our gaze can see the visible only. However, if we release our gaze from what remains inside the categories of being in ontology, we ‘immediately spot another part that is not filled, in the visible horizon, by the spectacle’. What remains outside the categories of being ‘is not presented as visible, the empty space between the visible and the visible’ (Marion, 1991, p. 112). The empty space is non-being, through which being can appear as such. The way of spotting the empty space is to neglect the visible. In doing so, the empty space manifests itself in an invisible manner. To employ a foreground/ background metaphor, the Good or goodness or the God is the ultimate background, which will always remain absent and invisible, whereas beings are the foreground, always present and visible.¹²

Approaching God, in Marion’s view, requires us to abandon our perspective, categories of being, understanding and arrogance. In *Exodus* 3: 14, Moses asks who God is. God answers him, *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, which means ‘I am the one who is/ I am who I am’ (Marion, 1991, p. 73). Marion explicates that this answer says nothing and says everything. This name says nothing because it provides no substantial information in categories of being, on the one hand; but it says everything because it signifies the mode of Being of God that God is his essence itself and no name or anything else in categories of being could sufficiently and comprehensively nominate God. To sum up the second argument, non-being does not mean non-existence but absence of an identical name. The absence of an identical name is closely correlated to the supremacy of God in the sense that it is greater than all categories of being in the world. As he says,

...nonbeing does not designate that which *is not*, and that it is attributed independently of deployment in and according to Being? ... “the world” no longer even gives a name, because in it the world sees nothing proper and nothing common (with itself) (Marion, 1991, p. 92).

Meontologically, God is anonymous, as it is ‘saturated’ compared to our deficiency. Neither in our theoretical world nor our practical world are we able to find anything proper and common with the goodness and greatness of God. The appropriate way of approaching God is thus remaining silent and humbly receiving God’s message. One might then wonder if it is possible for God to call us. According to the mode of Being of God, God will certainly call us even though we know nothing about his plan. This is why Marion asserts that ‘If, to begin with, ‘God is love,’ then God loves before being, He only is as He embodies himself in order to love more

¹² Marion has a detailed analysis of the intertwining of the visible and the invisible in Western paintings. In elsewhere, I argue for two possible relationships between the visible and the invisible in Marion’s analysis. First, the invisible organizes the visible if the gaze in perspective aims at the intentional object. Second, the invisible and the visible are placed together in the sense that the invisible merges in the visible. It requires surpassing objectivity without any particular human perspective. While the first relationship produces phenomenality in the sense of giving the intentional object represented, the second produces phenomenality in the sense of giving itself by itself (Tang 2021, pp. 204–214). The second relationship underlies Marion’s argument for a new way of approaching God.

closely that which and those who, themselves, have first to be' (Marion, 1991, p. xx). The nature of love is giving, so the calling of God is one of his embodiments.

An axio-meonto-Theo-logy Without *Logos*

What, in fact, does Marion's theology say? The predication and the predicate are not the necessary or even suitable ways of approaching God, as without receiving God's calling and message, we have no experience of God. In this regard, Marion proposes that,

If theology wills itself to be *theological*, it will submit all of its concept, without excepting the *ens*, to a "destruction" by the doctrine of divine names, at the risk of having to renounce any status as a conceptual "science", in order, decidedly nonobjectivating, to praise by infinite petitions (Marion, 1991, p. 81; original emphasis).

Theology has to be free from all categories of being, it must destruct all the established attribution predicated onto God. It must be at risk of having to renounce any status as a conceptual 'science'.¹³ Meanwhile, Marion's way of approaching God could understand the philosophical ground of atheism.¹⁴ Atheists doubt the existence of God, and even conclude the death of God. The conclusion can be formulated into a subject-predicate judgment, God is dead. Nietzsche not only proclaims 'the death of God', 'he brought the ground for it to light: under the conceptual names only metaphysical 'idols' emerge, imposed on God who is still to be encountered' (Marion, 1991, p. xxi). Atheists do not hesitate to use the concept of God because 'in order to be able to deny having an idea of God, it is necessary to have one' (Marion, 2015, p. 58). Consequently, Marion further clarifies the concept of God in atheism. The 'death of God' does not announce the death of God as *agape* but the death of the 'moral God'. It 'confirms the twilight of an idol; but just because it has to

¹³ Concerning the scientific character of theology, Heidegger has a discussion in relation to the objectivating and nonobjectivating mode of thinking and speaking. The widespread, uncritically accepted opinion that all thinking, as representing, and all speaking, as vocalization, are already 'objectivating'. However, only the thinking and speaking of the natural sciences is objectivating. Thinking and speaking are not exhausted by theoretical and natural-scientific representation and statement. The mode of thinking and speaking in theology and works of art need not to be objectivating because objectivating thinking and speaking would prevent the *theos* or the artwork from appearing. Interestingly enough, Heidegger concludes 'theology is not a natural science', but he leaves 'the question whether theology can still be a science' because he assumes that theology 'should not be a science at all' (Heidegger 1998, p. 61). Marion agrees with Heidegger that: (1) the mode of thinking and speaking in theology and works of art need not to be objectivating; (2) objectivating thinking and speaking would prevent the *theos* or the artwork from appearing; and (3) theology is not a natural science. However, Marion would disagree that theology 'should' not be a science at all. Rather than limiting theology by our preestablished idea of science that consists of objectivating mode of thinking and speaking only, Marion radicalizes the idea of science by including both objectivating and nonobjectivating modes of thinking and speaking into any future sciences. Therefore, theology is and should be a science.

¹⁴ One should bear in mind that in seeking to understand the philosophical grounds of atheism, Marion is not encouraging atheism. 'This hesitancy obviously should not be understood as a sign of atheism, which would be anachronistic to the point of being a misreading' (Marion and Kosky 1999, p. 786).

do with an idol, the collapse entails, even more than a ruin...the clearing of a new space...of God' (Marion, 1991, pp. 37–38). Atheism is compatible with the first step of Marion's way of approaching God, as both request the renunciation of all well-established predications or predicates of God. Metaphorically speaking, atheists employ the *epoche* onto the concept of God.

Marion's Theo-logy has a common ground with atheism.¹⁵ For atheists claim that it is impossible to experience God, but their attribution of God (the experiential impossibility of God) already ascribes a perfectly conceivable and thus acceptable meaning to God. It is paradoxical that we can disqualify the knowledge of God's essence, existence and phenomenon, but we cannot eliminate the very question of God. 'Consequently, not only our (metaphysical) impossibility of demonstrating the existence of God but especially our (nonmetaphysical) impossibility of defining by concept the least essence of God becomes ambivalent themselves, and therefore problematic' (Marion, 2015, p. 52). However, atheism resists searching for an alternative way of approaching God and rejects any calling, as they do not love God, or more to the point, they reject the 'gift' of God. Therefore, unlike *theo*-logy's reception of God's calling, atheists self-confidently announce their finding at the moment of *epoche* without moving on to the further step of approaching God.

According to Marion, if theology wills itself to be *theological*, it will submit all of its concept, at the risk having to renounce any status of theology as a science. It does not mean that theology stays at the stage of renouncing, or in other words, that it keeps silent once and for all. But rather, it first and foremost requires us to be humble and silent in order to wait patiently for God's calling. Renouncing any status as a conceptual science aims at turning back to God himself in our original relationship, *praising* by infinite petitions. Reasoned discourse and argument in *logos* would somehow distort our silence and humbling at the first stage. After receiving God's calling and message, Marion does not object that we announce them in words; although words can appropriate God that cannot be exhausted by humanized reason. Yet to bear in mind, *theo*-logy is principally determined from *theos* rather than through *logos*.

Given that praising is essential to *theo*-logy, Marion returns to his experiences of praising in the Christian context to revise the notion of *logos*. Rather than reasoned discourse and argument in *logos*, the Christian notion of *Logos* refers to Jesus Christ. 'Jesus Christ is called the *Logos*, the Word, and hence Reason' (Marion, 2008, p. 146). He makes a distinction between the lower case *logos* and the upper case *Logos*. As stated in *God without Being*, 'logic does not cover the field of revelation that the Johannine *Logos* opens to faith' (Marion, 1991, p. 63). The former

¹⁵ A similar ground can also be found in Richard Kearney's *Anatheism: Returning to God after God*. *Anatheism* discredits and questions religion and theology in the West and returns to the experiences of approaching God. I believe that atheism, Kearney and Marion are similarly in search of an original preceding genesis outside any humanized God. However, unlike atheism, Kearney and Marion further describe a deep religious sensibility and do not encourage atheism. Interestingly enough, Kearney's *Anatheism* still has several differences with Marion's theology. For all their similarities and differences, it is noteworthy to refer to their dialogue in 'Hermeneutics of Revelation' as at the time even Kearney has not yet clearly used the term *Anatheism* (Manoussakis 2006, pp. 318–339).

refers to humanized reason, whereas the latter specifically refers to Christ. With respect to St. Paul's pronouncement against secular Corinthian culture, St. Paul 'still speaks according to a *logos*, because he speaks in the name of the *Logos* and according to the *Logos*' (Marion, 2008, p. 146). The distinction does not imply a sharp separation between *logos* and *Logos*. But it reveals the reciprocal relationship that a *logos* is ontologically founded upon the *Logos* while the *Logos* can only spread with a *logos*. In other words, without reducing the revealed Word to a system of concepts within categories of being, it permits the development of a *theo-logy*, a knowledge about God through reasons coming from God (Marion, 2008, p. 146). How can we uncover reasons coming from God?

Marion's way of approaching God is grounded upon the revelation of God in loving. As he clearly states, 'only this love can give access to the "great Reason"' (Marion, 2008, p. 152). On the one hand, God is love. On the other hand, it is a commitment for a Christian to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself. If someone loves God, his neighbor or himself, God is revealed in his life. Jesus Christ shows the logic of love; that love is an amazing grace that supersedes all other reasons and accesses the Reason. The logic of love indicates four laws underlying the Reason, namely, certainty, possibility, the knowledge of self and alterity. Firstly, the law of certainty implies that love is an unconditional and non-reciprocal gift that it does not ask for return. Secondly, the law of possibility means that love itself is necessary for loving without regard for persons, no matter who they are, whether neighbors or enemies. Thus, nothing is impossible for love. Thirdly, the law of self-knowledge implies that self-knowledge is founded upon the love of the other; that I am recognized and ascertained by someone else. Fourthly, love displaces outside of itself, through which love restores the known to itself without being predicated under the categories of being. Therefore, Marion proposes a new direction of *theo-logy* that gives access to the *Logos* and appropriates the knowledge of God in loving, at the risk of reducing the *Logos* to a *logos* in speaking of it. Jesus Christ has proven it in his life by his action, his passion and his resurrection. Regardless of other reasoned discourse or argument, love is the simplest and the most forceful way to manifest the revelation of God that God is love.

Regardless of the theological appearance, I argue that Marion's project is founded upon the guidance of the phenomenological method. Marion proposes a phenomenological reduction of the concept of God, through which he realizes that 'what one uncovers with the help of the concept of God is an idol, which philosophically has only the signification of making us see what idea of *summon ens* and of Being is generally directive' (Marion, 2015, p. 57). By performing the phenomenological reduction, God de-nominates or abolishes 'the limits set by metaphysics to experiences' (the possible). 'This (im)possible can only be understood by opposition to that which it surpasses – by opposition to what metaphysics understands in its way as the relation between the possible and the impossible' (Marion, 2015, p. 71). In other words, the (im)possible surpasses the duality of the possible and impossible by sublating the possible 'into' the impossible. Marion suggests that the term 'the (im)possible', in fact, can also mean unconceivable, unthinkable or unimaginable. 'There is, then, no contradiction other than what is conceivable, and nothing is conceivable

that is within a conception of ours, and therefore *quoad nos*, for us, for our finite mind' (Marion, 2015, pp. 72–73). If something is unconceivable, unthinkable or unimaginable, then it could never be conceivable to us. It could be conceivable to us that God as the (im)possible refers to the entity which is unconceivable, unthinkable and unimaginable to us. It follows that God is not unconceivable and that God is somehow epistemologically possible for us. It is a valid argument (by denying the consequent, denying the antecedent). Marion adds that the degree of the knowledge of God is based upon the conceivability of man. He states that 'the impossible for man [us] has the name God, but God *as such* – as the one who alone does what man cannot even *contemplate*' (Marion, 2015, p. 82). God is a name or a limiting concept for what man cannot conceive, therefore it denotes what is impossible for man (us).

Gilbert (1994) and Ewbank (2002) correctly assert that if God is the one who is speaking, then the idea of God remains thinkable in the state of impossibility. Marion makes an insightful distinction between God in Himself [*in se*] and God towards us [*quoad nos*] (Marion, 2013, p. 15). For Marion, finite human beings cannot exhaustively speak about God 'in se' because our finitude of concepts cannot delimit God. For us it is impossible to have qualified concepts to directly reach the idea of God. As Marion explicates clearly, 'I cannot—again by definition—legitimately assign any concept to God, since every concept, by implying delimitation and comprehension, would contradict God's sole possible definition, namely that God transcends all delimitation and therefore all definitions supplied by my finite mind' (Marion, 2007, pp. 21–22). However, they do not put forward how the idea of God is thinkable in the state of impossibility. The greatness of God manifests his idea (based on the axiological understanding: God is greater than that which can be thought), allowing us to bracket the conceptual distinction between possibility and impossibility within the category of being. For God, nothing is impossible, the very idea of the impossible is impossible. Thus, Marion argues for 'the conversion of the impossible for us into the possible for God' so that a finite human being can appropriately speak about God 'quoad nos' (Marion, 2007, p. 27). This possibility (the impossibility of the impossible) is dependent of God rather than human being.

Here I defend Marion's axio-meonto-theology from some criticisms. Smith is correct to argue that for Marion, the phenomenology of religion 'prepares the way for faith'. But he then criticizes Marion by suggesting two results of this movement. 'This conception of a phenomenology of religion *reduces* religion to theology' and it '*particularizes* religion and the religious phenomenon as quite Christian – at best, monotheistic, and at worst, down right Catholic' (Smith, 1999, p. 23). The particularization and reduction make the field impossible for any who are different from Christian faith to enter. Similar to Smith's criticism, Ward argues that Marion's emphasis 'is increasingly upon dogmatically reinscribing the teachings of the Bible, the tradition and the Church. In theology there is no space for analysis, critique or interpretation. For theology is a sacrament' (Ward, 1998, p. 124). These critics argue that Marion's theology reduces the science of God to the science of Christian God.

These criticisms are clearly explained by Marion in *Givenness and Revelation*. The meaning or even the 'seeing' of *Theos* remains a *question* in Marion's Theology. This is precisely because 'No one has ever seen God' and he remains 'the only God, invisible' (Marion, 2016, p. 5). In the final instance, all the manifestations of

God in Jesus Christ, all the biblical 'theophanies' are under the field of Theo-*logy*, which is not a sacrament. The teachings of the Bible and the traditions of the Church thus can never be undogmatically taken for granted. This is why Marion attempts to point out that his *theo*-logy and atheism are both philosophically grounded upon the act of questioning rather than any unexamined knowledge of God. In this regard, Marion's theology and atheism share the same ground. Yet unlike atheism, Marion suggests that this very act of questioning allows one to wait for the call of God without taking the resultant appearance of a divinity for granted. 'The call in fact characterizes every saturated phenomenon as such' (Marion, 2002a, p. 267). Love or erotic phenomenon is one of the paradigmatic saturated phenomena which inverts intentionality, so it makes a call possible, indeed inevitable. God gives itself to His beloved before showing itself. 'The given, as a lived experience, remains a *stimulus*, an excitation, scarcely a piece of information: *l'adonné* receives it, without its showing itself' (Marion, 2002b, p. 49). The call and the response constitute the experience of what some may choose to name God.

Still, there are some criticisms that can be made against Marion's *theo*-logy. Horner argues that Marion's *theo*-logy repeats the moves of metaphysics, specifically the most basic onto-theo-logical move of using God to ground the system (Horner, 2005, p. 45, 105 and 142). According to Horner, there must be some ways that God will ever be circumscribed within predicative thoughts in Marion's theology. It is unavoidable to repeat the onto-theo-logical move of using certain predicates of God to ground the interpretation of God if one needs to know God. Prevot makes the same criticism by drawing a distinction between a strong sense of ontology and a weak sense of ontology. The former appears in metaphysics, and provide the inescapable logic or language game that regulates all others, even theology. By contrast, the latter would entail at least some intimation of that which transcends being: the trans-ontological. Prevot argues that under some additional phenomenological and prayerful conditions, Marion opens to a weaker ontology of this sort (Prevot, 2014, p. 254). He well-understands that Marion insists to cut all ties with ontology. However, he further argues that it implies a 'weakly' ontological form or a trans-ontological form of prayerful theology by drawing attention to Marion's elaboration of the status of a beyond of beingness (*επεκείνα της ουσίας*) in *The Visible and the Revealed* (Prevot, 2014, p. 258n18). Marion provides what is necessary to overcome the idolatrous tendencies of certain 'strongly' ontological traditions only although he continues to resist ontology in his works. I find Prevot's reading is inaccurate because he fails to recognize the role of axiological approach. In *The Visible and the Revealed*, when Marion discusses the status of a beyond of beingness, he does not argue for a 'weakly' ontological form or trans-ontological form of prayerful theology. But rather, he points out a close connection between the status of a beyond of beingness and the 'idea of the good (*ιδέα του αγαθού*)' in Plato's philosophy. As Marion states, '[i]n all of these cases, one would have to extend the status of a beyond of beingness (*επεκείνα της ουσίας*) to every being-given, something Plato reserved solely for the 'idea of the good (*ιδέα του αγαθού*)' (Marion, 2008, p. 58). Meontology studies the status of a beyond of beingness, whereas axiology studies 'idea of the good'. In this way, Marion suggests a theology which is founded upon meontology and axiology instead of a 'weakly' ontological form or a

trans-ontological form of prayerful theology. Marion's theology bypasses all forms of ontology and takes meontology to axiology. These exegetical remarks that Marion's axio-meonto-theo-logy does not imply a new ontology.

Furthermore, Marion deepens the problem of interpretation by shifting the focus. Instead of repeating the from onto-theo-logical move by investigating how the predicates of God ground the interpretation of God, Marion inquires whether the predicate of God is accepted by the believer. This inquiry allows the believer to intend something that is not precisely or strictly given, but taken on faith,

Faith... bring the understanding to decide to will or not to will to accept the coming of God who gives himself in and *as* the event of Jesus. The request of faith in front of Revelation opens the non-idolatrous space of alterity—this very space that we experience, within the limits of our finitude and egocentrism, in every other experience of the other, but which, in this case, can no longer play itself out in half-measures, or hide itself in polite neutrality (Marion, 2016, p. 117).

In our daily life, faith bears the predication of God which has already been given. And in the encounter of God, faith asks us to decide to will or not to will to accept the coming of God who gives himself in our life. God is an indexical name denoting not only the giver of saturated phenomena but also the essential character of the giver, that is, love. Within the limits of our finitude and egocentrism, a believer 'can no longer play itself out in half-measures, or hide itself in polite neutrality' (Marion, 2016, p. 117). His *theo*-logy suggests that a believer should be loyal to his faith when he encounters unexamined *logos*, that is, humanized reason, while he should be critical to his faith when he receives the call of *Logos*.

Marion demonstrates his *theo*-logy by remaining faithful to a Judeo-Christian theology because of his faith, namely, his Catholic background. Yet he is liberal to traditions other than the Judeo-Christian heritage. Any names, including God, Gxd, *Theos* and *Logos*, are empty names in the sense that they are radically deficient to grasp the excess source of the given. Marion's *theo*-logy differs from the onto-theo-logical move in traditional theologies because it operates in accordance with *Logos* rather than *logos*. In this way, Marion does not reject humanized reason; rather, he explores the unfathomable origin of reason by showing how it is free from all categories of being. Fritz is correct that Marion finds reason and faith might cooperate in a way that breaks the stranglehold of metaphysics on Western thought (Fritz, 2012, p. 324).¹⁶ On the one hand, humanized reason under

¹⁶ I agree with Fritz's interpretation. The realm of faith should not be sharply separated from reason although they are theoretically different. If reason refers to *logos* (the modern sense of reason or Sufficient Reason), then reason consists of exercising within all categories of being. Faith should be separated from reason (*logos*) because faith concerns the realm other than being. But Marion argues alternatively in his recent article 'Faith and Reason' that the opposition is artificial, for faith has its reasons and scientific reason has its belief (Marion 2017, p. 3). If reason refers to *Logos*, which consists of exercising within all categories of being as well as beyond all categories of being, then faith is inseparable from Reason (*Logos*).

models of logic, principles of linguistic, psychic derives and so forth can only attain what can be universalized, modeled and measured by man, so it fails to recognize its finitude. On the other hand, humanized reason which always retains its own finite integrity and individual concreteness is imprinted quasi-transcendentally by God's infinity and incomprehensibility (Fritz, 2012, p. 333n76). Only in the Great Reason, man can recognize himself as the finite because of its inadequate image of the original infinite in relation to the infinity. However, I disagree with Fritz that *Believing In order to See* contrasts sharply with the two-part structure of God without Being (Fritz, 2012, p. 337). The two-part structure of *God without Being* is necessary for the harmony Marion envisions in *Believing In order to See*, as Marion firstly practices phenomenological reduction to bracket all prejudices of theology, and then complements a new way of approaching and addressing God (by the meontological argument and the axiological argument) to retain the harmony of reason and faith in axio-meonto-theology without the misleading guidance of humanized reason. In other words, *theo*-logy is not grounded in humanized reason but in the 'Great Reason' which can never be exhausted by finite beings, although it is we, the human beings, who raise the question. The Great Reason is anonymous to us. Marion is open to any God that appears in revelation outside a Judeo-Christian theology. As he clearly states in his dialogue with Kearney,

I do think that the question of God is so great that, to some extent, we have to admit that all the different traditions, including those that are apparently foreign to the biblical heritage, are needed in order to say something about God (Manoussakis, 2006, p. 322).

The main contribution of Marion's *theo*-logy is not to make any absolute claim for a Judeo-Christian theology, but rather, it creates a space where the task of *theology* can begin so as to appropriate the *Logos*. In this regard, on the one hand, one has no guarantee of any absolute meaning of God; on the other hand, one needs to love in order to be shaped by the experience of exposure. Therefore, it provides a possible response to Horner's claim that 'it is difficult to avoid repeating metaphysics in another register, at least by implication' (Horner, 2005, 149). Marion's *theo*-logy does not repeat metaphysics in another register because it does not use the predication of God to ground the system, but rather, it is ground on the whole way of approaching God: (1) the question of God; (2) the waiting for God; (3) the love from God; and (4) the decision towards God to ground the faith. (1) and (2) are based the meontological argument while (3) and (4) are founded upon the axiological argument. In short, these constitute the axio-meontological move in Marion's *theo*-logy.

Conclusion

Marion is questioning the traditional ways of approaching God and the standard view of assigning ‘God’ with ‘Being’ as the most fundamental reality.¹⁷ Alternatively, he proposes a new way of approaching God. He applies phenomenological reduction to the traditional conceptions of God, and it paves the beginning of the way to the fundamental step approaching God, namely, letting us be silent and await God’s call. Such a proposal is based on the axiological argument and the meontological argument. Axiologically, God cannot be approached by predication in the theoretical attitude, but it can be approached by silent, receiving *agape* in the practical attitude. Meontologically, ‘God’ is first and foremost not a being but a non-being or goodness free from all categories of being in ontology. Marion demonstrates his axio-meonto-theo-logy by a radical reduction of Anselm’s argument and atheist argument. The radical reduction makes a distinction between idol God and icon God, or the cognized God and the religious God, or the rational God and the revealed God. The role of the former is to capture our gaze, whereas the latter brings a cessation of our gazing: we cease to scan the horizon for we have found that which we believe is worthy of our gaze. Consequently, from the place of ‘being’ looking outward we are only able to see our own type of existence even in what we assign as deity. And in this way, his axio-meonto-theo-logy can be interpreted as prolegomena to any future science of God. In no way is Marion attempting to approach and address God through humanized reasons, but rather human beings have to be silent and patient to wait for the call of God or *theos* through love.

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¹⁷ It is true that *God without Being* is an extremely early source, situated in a very particular French debate. But one cannot deny that it grounds Marion’s broader philosophical and theological claims. As Fotiade and Jasper point out, it is a landmark volume in beginning to disengage the existence of God from the metaphysical concept of Being (Marion 2016, p. xvii).

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